

VZCZCXRO3825
PP RUEHPA
DE RUEHAB #0261 0681650
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 091650Z MAR 06
FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1066
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 1299
RUEHKE/AMEMBASSY KINSHASA 0280

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABIDJAN 000261

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KINSHASA PASS TO BRAZZAVILLE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/09/2016

TAGS: [PGOVE](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC IV](#)

SUBJECT: COTE D'IVOIRE: ELECTORAL COMMISSION DEADLOCK IS
BROKEN

REF: ABIDJAN 228

Classified By: POL/ECON Jim Wojtasiewicz, reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

11. (U) On March 7, the outgoing executive board of the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) met with the incoming board, to officially hand over governance of the board.

12. (U) This formalizes the agreement that was reached at the February 28 Yamoussoukro summit of Cote d'Ivoire's four principal political leaders (reftel), under which President Gbagbo's Ivoirian Popular Front (FPI) party agreed to drop its legal challenge to the way the new board was elected last October, in exchange for the creation of a new fourth vice president position which FPI would fill.

13. (C) Comment: This is a major step forward in the peace process. The CEI can now begin its work to organize the elections that were postponed from last year. Even more importantly, at least for now the Gbagbo camp has accepted an arrangement under which the opposition controls the CEI. This is another victory for Prime Minister Banny, who brokered this deal after UN High Representative for Elections Antonio Monteiro could not. It increases the prospects that voter registration will be inclusive, rather than skewed towards ethnic groups and regions that support Gbagbo. It is still not clear how the CEI will work together with the National Statistical Board (INS). The INS is responsible for the logistics of registering voters under the supervision of the CEI, but Gbagbo cronies control it and the opposition has long feared that the INS could assert independent authority and work to fix the election for Gbagbo. Nevertheless, the peace process is clearing gaining momentum under Prime Minister Banny. There is still time to hold elections by October 30, although that does not look likely. End Comment.
Hooks